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February 12, 2016

William H. Dwight
City Council President
Northampton City Hall
Room 16
210 Main Street
Northampton, MA 01060

Dear Council President Dwight,

I write to express my appreciation that the Northampton City Council will be considering a resolution at the February 18, 2016, City Council meeting to "*Oppose the TPP and Similar Trade Deals If They Fail to Restructure the Misguided and Failed Policies of the Past.*" It has always been my experience that such resolutions, and the debate they engender, are helpful to me here in Congress when these matters are brought before the U.S. House of Representatives for a debate and vote. The views of my constituents and the cities and towns in the 2nd Congressional District are very important in how I assess the merits of legislation.

I share many of the views and concerns expressed in the resolution that is being offered by City Councilors Maureen T. Carney, Alisa F. Klein and you. The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) is an extensive trade agreement involving twelve Pacific nations, which will have far-reaching effects on our laws and economy for decades. Last October, these 12 nations – the United States, Japan, Malaysia, Vietnam, Singapore, Brunei, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Mexico, Chile and Peru – concluded five years of negotiations; on November 6th, the text of the agreement was made public; and on February 4, 2016, the trade ministers of the twelve nations met in Auckland, New Zealand, to formally sign the agreement. It now has a two-year period during which it must be ratified. Currently, it is my understanding that the leadership of both the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate has no plans to bring the TPP up for consideration prior to the November elections.

I reject the simplistic debate we hear too often that trade is either categorially good or bad: We all recognize that trade can be beneficial. However, today's trade agreements and our global trading system are far more complex than the simple agreements of the past, and this is especially true for an agreement as monumental as the TPP. We need to ask ourselves whether today's trade agreements, including the TPP, advance the ability of our workers to find quality jobs at quality wages. We need to ask whether the TPP will revitalize manufacturing and job creation here at home or further encourage U.S. companies to move their production offshore to other TPP countries. We need to ask whether these trade agreements promote the public health of


our communities, protect our citizens as consumers, and safeguard the quality of our environment. We need to ask whether new drugs and medicines will be available in a timely manner and affordable to our citizens, and indeed to all people, including the most vulnerable here at home and abroad. I also believe we need to ask whether this agreement will help or harm workers, small farmers, and vulnerable people in all the nations that are party to the TPP.

We need to know that laws and regulations approved by our city and state governments will not be overturned in favor of foreign corporate interests because of adjudication procedures established in trade negotiations. We need to be sure that the TPP and other trade agreements will allow us to address and not further exacerbate our country's growing economic inequality and stagnant middle class. And we need to be sure that the value of our goods and services will not be undermined by the manipulation of other nations' currencies.

After careful examination of these questions, and reading and listening to proponents and opponents of the TPP, I have concluded that the TPP will not advance the best interests of our citizens, especially in the matters noted above. I have, therefore, decided that I will oppose the TPP, unless the final legislation that may be taken up by the House provides significant changes and enforceable conditions that make it more responsive to the needs of the American worker, the American consumer, our environment, and local and state governments.

Once again, thank you for taking up the serious matter of the TPP and how trade agreements affect our daily life and the economy. I look forward to your debate and vote on the resolution at the February 18th meeting of the Northampton City Council.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Jim McGovern", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

James P. McGovern
Member of Congress